it's THE OMEN

That Magazine is dumb.

It's actually a newspaper. It just looks like a magazine.

Well, whatever it is, I've never seen anything ominous about it. Like, Nothing in The Omen ever foreshadows my life.

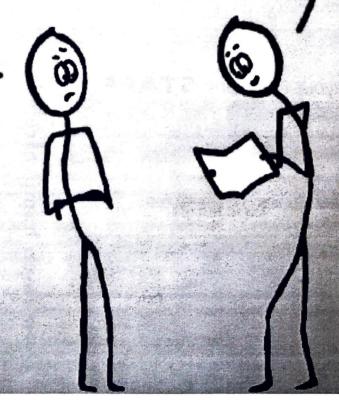


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For the third issue in the 51st Volume of the Omen on October the tenth in the Year of our Lord 2008.

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The Reluctant Christianisation of Adam Krellenstein 08 the Early English Epic...

OK, the lights in the Omen office just burnt out. That's it. I'm fed up with this place. It's Tuesday afternoon, this thing needs to get finished. You all can find things on your own without a table of contents. Meanwhile, I need to put in a work order.



To Submit:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD. Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon. paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Evan Silberman, Prescott 102E, box 1394, ejs07@hampshire.edu.

> "Hey, hey, D-A-K, how many pages are you going to be today?"

- Evan protests lengthy articles

Front Cover:

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Sasha Allegretta	Wench's mom
David Axel Kurtz	Catullus
Alex Wenchel	Al Gore

Alex Wenchel Back Cover: Alex Wenchel

Editorial: Slacking

by Lindsay Barbieri

I feel as though I should start off by apologizing for my lack of editorial. Not to most of you reading this - you pretty much got what you deserved (except the few of you who submitted) but to Abbey and Jacob (and probably other former Omen editors out there). I apologize for not living up to the Omen editor standards of slacking... not for the actual slacking off, not for the fact that I didn't write an editorial - but for the lack of creativity in my slacking.

If I could do it all again I would have the title: Lindsay's Best Drawing of a Polar Bear in a Blizzard and the rest would have been just as blank as it was.

On a completely different note I have some life observations that are frustrating, and some life observations that are amazing.

Frustrating: The use of colors pink and blue to denote lower and higher level math books in elementary school. The rise in birth control prices at health services - it went up \$15 from last year, though insurance companies are covering Viagra for men under the age of 65 (claim comes from Health Services nurse, I admit to having done no research of my own). And the fact that Atkins has apple pickings hours only on Saturday and Sunday - not on Friday.

Amazing: Josh from duplications is continually amaz-

ing. Josh - you rock! The sun is entering its next 11 year active cycle so expect more sunspots and other such activity.

The whiteboard is Saga has been particularly excellent lately - I have particularly enjoyed the Shakespeare Quotes, loke Punch Lines and Songs You Sing ... in the Shower.

Some day I will tell you my favorite joke in the whole

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submirting right now, right?) might not be edited,

and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

The Omen Haiku

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)

OMENVOLUME.3 I OMENISSUE.03 OMENOMENOMENSECTION. HATEOMENOME

An assault on my self-esteem (Spam in my inbox) Zaike LaPorte-Airey

Ross Dean

Ismael Swanson

Parker Stein

ruby

Leading the enlargement revolution Achieve maximum sexual nirvana Nausue Viagr@ at \$1.41 Lissa Jessica Alba exposed and naked Etan elmootaz Viagra (Sildenafil) 50mg x 60 pills buy now Rouavone Experience new heights of pleasure Ann Sandoval Carla Plummer Get your self esteem back now Price for Viagra 100mg x 90 pills Viagra (Sildenafil) 100mg x 60 pills US \$ Stanley Street Dexter Mayo Stop feeling inadequate now Kuleci Kate Walsh in an interesting upskirt Chase Buy now Viagra 60mg x 30 pills Lori Herron Wonderful world of orgasm Pavlina The truth about orgasms karcaruz Wanna go on a hot date rihan US \$ 99.95 Price for 100mg x 30 pills Alex Culver US \$ 69.95 Viagra 100mg x 10 pills price Silvia Nicholson I will make Austin Powers ashamed Kernohan Viagra (Sildenafil) 50mg x 10 pills Tracy Sams Viagra 100mg x 60 pills \$129.95 price Neil Kerr Girls touch themselves Koller You are nominated for the MBA Mindy Willard Stop being the joke around town Koepp Viagra 50mg x 10 pills US \$ 6.00 Per Pill Roosevelt Adrian Oconnor Give her your long tool Viagra 100mg x 60 pills buy now Aimee Ferguson Shumate Hit her G spot all the time Daniel Lovett You owe it to yourself! Behling Real men have real peckers Respective Libidos Your happiness Brandenburg Watch the desire in her eyes yuki Be the master of the bed Heaps Grow a long and hard one Blanca Richter Reach so needed measurement Marc Knight Become a super-hung giant Honickman She will squirt with joy Kelli Sutherland Become a perfect lover LILIANE Make her horny with this Lydia Mata Be an object of all women's craving Bill Ever considered having a bigger manhood Araceli Ouellette Get a key to her heart! ggggg Great tight butt cheeks Delmer Delaney Male tool upgrading Stimulation No Impotence Hyung Your bazooka is set to rock Siddiqui

Seduce her like this

Secrets to tiptop orgasm

Greater pleasure for you

Gain up to 4 extra inches

Immeasurable wand of pleasure

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Horace Pena

Zachariah Baird Sheila Brandt Reva Bergman Luz Hatch Alfredo Whitehead Jerrod Galloway Rubin Cervantes Seth Mendoza Benjamin Robinson Dennis Cortes Bettve Spangler Lynda Phipps Lottie Dumas Mandy Hawk Karvn Hooks Milton Garrett Vera Herring Shirley Dejesus Amparo Corcoran Shawna Messer Lilian Arroyo Liza Diggs Hugo Rios Pauline Pryor Loretta Kimball Rupert Irwin Clarence Parker Osvaldo Eldridge Damion Moody Larry Hedrick Delores P. Katz Dr. Lee Hagan Man's response dede Hil Fabiola Naira DEHAAN

Shioan

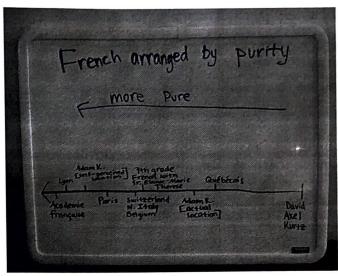
Jeanne Nance

Make her notice your manliness Immense augmentation of your tool Perfect proportions are easily attained Massive rod is easy to gain Gain additional centimeters! Make women crave for it! The best present for your girl Create a furore in her bedroom! Stimulate your shaft growth Women are attracted to giants She will dream of you every night Masculine power at its best Make it large and steady as rock! Learn what can make your qf happy More inches and more force Enormous bell-rope is a dream of every wife Size is very important I can satisfy any girl I wish what about you? Size is very important Become a perfect lover All you want to know about intimate problems Time to get it bigger Forget about ED problems for ever Attract more hot women Swank is what your life lacks Gain up to 4 extra inches Achieve all your dreams of super \$!ze! Sex Mistakes All Men Make Impress the Ladies! She has never been with a guy so well endowed However, I always wished that I was bigger and Great male machine drive women crazy Get equipped with bigger package in New Year! Have you increased your instrument? No Erectile Dysfunction Enhance erection power and ability Get the treatment for a larger penis Help for erectile dysfunction Pump her all night long Give her the best rocking night ever Can you take girls this hot Enlarge your pleasure!

Comic by Audrey Weber







by Sasha Allegretta

The Reluctant Christianisation of Early English Epics with Paganism as a Plot Device

This piece was written by Adam Krellenstein in his senior year of high school.

1 Introduction

In the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., Christianity spread to the British Isles and converted the inhabiting Anglo-Saxons, conquering the polytheism in place. As it did so, Christian values replaced pagan, chivalrous and classical ones; Christ gradually drove heathenism from the region altogether, and the process by which this occurred is depicted in the evolution of the epic narratives of the time and place.

Through detailed analysis of period poetry, the values of authoring populations may be deduced and thereby used to track the assimilation of the island of Great Britain by Christianity through the High Middle Ages and into the seventeenth century. This work focuses on three sample ep-

ics from the 10th, 14th and 17th centuries and uses them as representative works from each time period. The first to be examined is Beowulf, the second, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and the third, Paradise Lost.

These three works are not being used in a proper statistical analysis, but constitute a collection of three separate discussions, each with its own independent conclusion. But, as these three conclusions come together to suggest such a pleasingly simple trend, all obvious inferences will be shamelessly made at the appropriate points. These inferences nevertheless maintain some merit, as the works chosen are among the most significant from each period.

Thus are the striking conclusions all the more striking. All three authors can be seen not only sympathising with pagan ideals, but, even better, using them to drive their respective plots in place of Christianity: in each work, it is not God who orchestrates the story, but a vengeful warrior, a meddling mistress of Merlin or a pagan Satan.

2 Beowulf does not quite love his enemy Beowulf was first written down around 1000 AD, after surviving in oral tradition for many centuries. As such, it is one of the best sources of Old English epic poetry we have, and will probably ever get: Beowulf itself makes up some 10% of the corpus of all Old English. It is one of the only works of this period, and for its limited anthropological significance has been the subject of much unnecessary discussion.

The topic of the controversy is probably the second most popular topic of literary analysis: religion. (The first is sex.) Beowulf is greatly over-analysed for this reason and because of its supposed publication date. Many read too much into its vague allusions at immortal souls and higher powers: it's maybe the historian equivalent of Virgin Marys in one's toast.

The harsh reality is that despite its date of origin and cursory coverage of Christian concepts, Beowulf is and remains a primarily pagan poem which exalts not a long-haired and sandal-wearing carpenter with tidings of God's eternal love, but an armour-clad and heavily-muscled swordsman who saves villages from scary monsters.

Not everyone sees things this clearly today, but they used to, alas! According to Christopher M. Cain, Ph.D., assistant professor of English, the prevailing theory of the 19th century was that, at the time of Beowulf's transcription, Christianity had not yet reached the Angles and the Saxons. F.A. Blackburn, in his 1897 work, argues this and that what Christianity is present in the text is a result of redaction, or transcription tweaking.[1]

Cain is today convinced of Larry Benson's, (professor of English,) absurd notion that Beowulf's characters can not be both pagan and "exceptionally good" (Cain, 227)[1]; also that whatever vague allusions to the Bible and Christianity exist were modelled after the obscurity of the "holy" text itself (Cain, 228)[1], and that had the author of Beowulf wanted to espouse pre-Christian pagan ideals, he should have replaced the "backsliding Danes, highly valued treasures, and ritual obsequies" with "human sacrifice, orgies, and endless revenge murders" (Cain, 237)[1]. He seems to argue that only such a plot would prove the pagan sympathies of the author and that an absence of evidence is really evidence of existence!

But Cain's argument works to his own undoing, for he cites considerable evidence for the opposite conclusion,

one, albeit with minor allusions to the Bible, that may or may not have been inserted by sneaky monks in transcripmay not have been think of it, there were three "revenge murders" in Beowulf. A more cogent analyst than Cain, C. Tidmarsh Major argues that reality is not always as simple as we would Major argues and that the question of the pagan or Chris. like it to beneve the benevalf is a false dilemma. In lieu of such a bifurcation, he asserts that there is a middle ground: the two biturcation, it combined (syncretism is the cultures (pagan and Christian) combined (syncretism is the word he uses) to form a composite piece. As he states, when confronted with Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons converted, but held on to some pre-Christian convictions (Major, 2)

Here's an alternate hypothesis: Major is on the right track here, but is still too conservative; he does not follow his own idea to the logical conclusion that the author of Beowulf believed in Christianity only superficially, as practically none of the prominent themes of this pre-eminent epic is definitively Christian in nature. What evidence there is for Christian sympathies consists of general appreciation for some human qualities that happen to be valued in that tradition. Take, for instance, the funeral description of Beowulf as, "the kindest and gentlest of men" (Major, 7)[4], as lesus was once described. Major takes this to be evidence that the author was, "likely a cleric himself" (Major, 7)[4]. So both Jesus and Beowulf were virtuous and selfless and kind and gentle... Beowulf was also a warrior king... not a monk carpenter.

Others characterise the author of Beowulf as one who has accepted at least a majority of Christian teachings; but, this conjecture, too, is irreconcilable with the text. Instead. the author holds pagan ideals (and those of any decent human being) and is simply familiar with Christian lore. What Christian ideas may be found in Beowulf are ageless in their prestige; these values need not have originated in Christian doctrine. Indeed, Beowulf is surprisingly pagan, highlighting pagan ideals and pagan rituals that were valued by Anglo-Saxons and West Germanics even after the growth of Christianity began in their territories in the north.

The anonymous author not only sympathises with truly pagan ideals, but makes them the heart of the plot: the story is centred around a Geat universally described as a legendnamely that Beowulf was not a Christian epic, but a pagan ary warrior hero. This Herculean character travels from

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Geatland to Zealand when the latter comes under attack by a raging monster that regularly ravages the village in the night, Grendel. Sequentially, Beowulf alone saves the village by killing Grendel, and later, its mother and an unrelated dragon (many years later) which devastates his kingdom. As anyone can see, Beowulf does not exactly follow the edict, "love thine enemy". It is not a Christian watchmaker God, or a Christ-figure that engineers the plot, but mythic monsters eating villagers.

3 Sir Gawain superficially supplicates

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight comes along nigh four hundred years after Beowulf, when Christianity was much better established in the English Isles: by this year, it was firmly established as the reigning religion of the region. As a point of contrast, in Beowulf, there are no direct references to Christianity, Christ or even the New Testament; the religious references are vague and indirect. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, there are many, much stronger references to Christianity and Christian mores: Gawain came along much later, near the end of the Middle Ages, when Christi- the men say to him, in his absence, anity had thoroughly permeated England.

That is not to say that it had completely overcome other cultural mores. Indeed, we look at Sir Gawain and see a noble knight struggling with competing value systems. On the one hand, we have warrior chivalry and pagan heroics; on the other, we have Christian humility and spirituality. Sir Gawain, like Beowulf, represents an ongoing struggle to incorporate Christianity with the traditional ideals of chivalry and knightly honour on which its protagonist heavily relies.

This extant chivalry in some contexts is touted as Christian in nature. On the contrary, it is a pagan system and not a Gentile one: its pagan origins are simply under-appreciated. Historians track the development of Medieval systems of warrior and romantic chivalry all the way back to West Germanic tribal tradition of around 100 A.D. The culture of these tribes, as they met the Roman Empire, was described at length in Germania by Tacitus, and many of his descriptions of their system of honour coincide very closely with the Christianised Medieval chivalry.

But there is no denying the Christianity in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Quite significantly, the tale focuses on Christmas season and related festivities and games. As Evans states, "the poet was writing in a time and place in

which Christianity in general... set the tone of the entire culture."[2] It is thus appropriate that the poem is regularly interrupted (though quite transiently) by morning masses and vague prayers to Christ.

It is this atmosphere which is so significant, for it develops one of the key meanings of the story: the general acceptance of the Christian religion but the absent deep belief in it. It is pagan magic and an atheistic, heroic attitude which instead dominate the epic poem of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, while true piety is barely missed:

The story begins at a feast when an unknown "Green Knight" flies into King Arthur's court (at whose side Gawain sits) and challenges the court to a dangerous game. Initially no one accepts the challenge, so Arthur himself steps up, only for Gawain to insist that he play instead, knowing he might lose his head: here Gawain's reputation as a humble knight is at stake, and he insists on taking the deadly risk to protect his honour.

As he leaves Arthur's court and rides to his certain death,

(grieving for that good man:) before God, 'tis a shame that thou, lord, must be lost, who art in life so noble! To meet his match among men, Marry, 'tis not easy!

To behave with more heed would have behoved one of

and that dear lord duly a duke to have made, illustrious leader of liegemen in this land as befits him; and that would have been than to be butchered to

beheaded by an elvish man for an arrogant vaunt. Who can recall any kind that such a course ever took as knights quibbling at court at their Christmas games! (Tolkien, 49)[8]

On this journey, Gawain realizes the effect of his rash behavior of the previous season. He travels far and wide, but can not find his opponent, and he is soon cold, exhausted and very uncomfortable.

In prayer he did now ride, lamenting his misdeed (Tolkien, 52)[8]

There are differing interpretations of the significance of Gawain's attitude here and his prayer. Robert C. Evans argues that Gawain has, "fully [realized] his dependence on God, and now he is totally focus on worshiping God properby [2] Gawain crosses himself and prays to the Virgin Mary inscribed on the inside of his shield, asking for her to guide him to, "some lodging" for the sake of comfort (Tolkien, 51) [8]. But this does not work, so he sighs and asks instead,

Mass

ien, 52)[8]

It almost seems as if Gawain here tries to manipulate Mary by asking for shelter for the sake of prayer. Whatever his aim, his prayers are answered, and he is presented with wonderful castle reminiscent of Arthur's: full of the same worldly goods. Even Evans accepts that here Gawain slips back into the previous mode of infinite indulgence and unending partying. He loses sight of God, to whom he prayed fervently but a few hours previously. He stays at this castle until the very day he has promised to be at the Green Chapel, including in feasts daily and teasing a lady of the castle incessantly.

In the end, it is not God or Mary that saves Gawain from decapitation, but his own virtuous and chivalrous character. Thus does the author express his partial favouring of these characteristics over the superficially honoured Christian ones. It is here revealed that it was not the Virgin Mary who deigned Gascain to arrive at the castle of his temptations, but a sorceress and the Green Knight himself. It was not Christ that protected him from the blade, but a magic garter.

Sir Gawain is a character representative of the English- 6.884-86, 888-92)[5] man who accepts Christianity only when in need and thus superficially. He will all too readily slip back to pagan ideals of hemics and world indulgences, but will do so honestly. It is this that saves him. As it is in Bewelf, pages forces drive in the latter work.

moore for Satan

oversity Christian, for it contains hundreds of references to both the Old and New Testaments. Indeed the story is taken directly from Gonesis, whereas the other two plots were Christ are certainly designed to be admirable. based on the oral tradition of warmongering knights. Mil-

and his work definitively reflects this.

But Milton's submission to the Church was not complete, and he, like the other two authors, made a pagan hero the protagonist of his epic, at least partially. This protagonist is, of course, Satan: for the assertion that Satan is a hero N "the oldest, and possibly the most persistent, of many confor some harbour where with honour I might hear the troversies over Paradise Lost* (Steadman, 253)[7]. This is no accident; this view is not to be dismissed. Not only is and thy Matins tomorrow. (This meekly I ask.) (Tolk-Satan a hero of this work, but he is in a very pagan way.

Milton calls the temptation of man heroic outright, in the process comparing it to the trials of the classical-era enics and relating the struggle between Satan and Christ to melee combat (Forsyth, 2)[3]. Indeed, this is not where the similarities between Paradise Lost and The Aeneid end: there are many direct and indirect references to this other work in Paradise Lost, and it is notable that the structure of the latter

The first battle between Christ and Satan in Paradise Lost is described in the "epic tradition" as Jennifer Smith

With jubilee advanced; and as they went, Shaded with branching palm, each order bright Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King

Worthiest to reign: he celebrated rode Triumphant through mid heaven, into the courts And temple of his mighty Father throned On high: who into glory him received, Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss. (Milton

Northrop Frye, literary critic and theorist, states, according to Smith, "_it is to Satan and his followers that Milton assigns the conventional and Classical type of heroism [6]. the epic, not Christian ones, these are merely more visible But Frye names Satan as a perverted hero and Christ as the real one. And however boring this prospect is, we should not 4 Milhon accepts Christ into his heart, but leaves a little fool ourselves and reject it, for it is the closest to the truth.

So much for the sympathising, By and large, Milton does There is no denying that Milton's 1667 magnum opus is accept Christianity and Christian doctrines. And while State Christianity and Christian doctrines. tan does express some qualities of a pagan hero, he is also depicted as a despicable, jealous character, where God and

But where the Father and Son are virtuous, they are also ton was certainly a devoor Christian, if not a traditional one, impotent and illogical. God can not prevent the fall of man-

christ, successfully tempts man, though God's angels try to har him from Eden, and warn Adam and Eve that they will he thus tried.

fruit for eternity; paganism is more realistic.

5 Conclusion

Knight and Paradise Lost, the authors struggle with Chrisand chivalrous heroism that preceded it. They were each good plot. written in Christian environments, albeit very different ones, and they all harbour pagan sentiments that are in opposition with Christian mores. In Berwulf, the protagonist possibly accepts the concept of the immortal soul, but holds tightly to the ingrained system of revenge which motivates him to kill beast after beast.

In Sir Gassain and the Green Knight, the characters superficially accepts Christ, and pray to him (and related icons) in times of need, but completely ignore the doctrines that he taught. In the few days of trials that the epic depicts, Sir Gassain himself becomes guilty of Lust for the young lady, Gluttouy for the food and wine, Greed for the garter, Sloth for the procrastination, Pride for accepting the challenge, New York City, 1674. and even Envy of Arthur. That's six of the seven deadly sins.

Finally, seventeen centuries after Christ, Milton in Paradise Lost accepts Christianity as the basis for his great epic poem. The fall of Adam and Eve is expounded in a liberal and independent fashion: the villains in Paradise Last are so because they commit the deadly sins, and the heroes of story do not. But even Milton's belief is not pure: he must fall back on classical hattle imagery to define heroism and sympathises with Satan whose reasoning was at times quite rational

There was, as is shown by the analysis of these three works of epic poetry, a gradual and perhaps reluctant acceptance of Christianity of early English writers. Initially, the people still told campfire stories of heros such as Beowulf, though Christianity had come to their dwelling place. Then, once it had cemented itself in their minds, scaring them into praying to Jesus and such, it was clear from what records we

and does not reason his decisions but leaves them to mere have of the time, people believed in Christianity only faith; it is instead Satan who justifies his actions by logical superficially, and yet believed pagan magac and mysticism arguments, and it is he who is victorious: Satan, the Anti-drove their lives and chivalrous behaviour (non-Christian)

Eventually, at least by 1667, significantly epic authors actually believed in a Christian world-view, though the Milton implies that where Christian deities exist, they insufficient intellectuality of these beliefs forced them to are still not what govern man and motivate him. It is so: pi-compensate by supplementing their works with references ety would have Adam and Eve remain in the garden picking to classical buttles and pagan definitions of hemosum. The later the work of English epic poetry, the less defined this reluctance is, and the more completely it is that pagan, clas-In all three works, Bennulf, Sir Gannin and the Green sical and chivalrous hemics have been superseded. But still: these three value systems are acknowledged by these great tianity and its competition with the value systems of pagan authors to be the real motivator of man and the impetus for

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Some things which I, controversially,

am not a big fan of by Evan Silberman

I do not get J.M.W. Turner. I look at his paintings and I that movie now, man, those dudes were gay. don't see anything particularly to like. I don't think they are bad, not by a long shot. But neither do I find them exciting or groundbreaking or interesting. I mean, they've got lots of glowng wispy atmosphere and colors blending together almost indistinguishibly.

But hey, people don't usually get too worked up about art these days. Most people don't care whether or not I like Turner. They do seem to care, though, when I inform them that I haven't seen whatever movie they think is an unmissible cultural touchstone and possibly the pinnacle of the cinematic form. Seriously, there are plenty of classic and acclaimed movies that haven't held up over the years or really weren't all that outstanding to begin with.

Take Animal House. I had heard for years from all sorts of reliable authorities that Animal House was the zenith of American comedic film, that it was beyond reproach, that it was, most of all, funny. So it was with high expectations that I sat down to watch it one day during June of 2007. And man, let me tell you, that movie was shitty. I can't even remember enough of the movie to remember what about it was shitty, but it pretty much completely failed to be entertaining. I had to provide my own entertainment by looking for evidence that all the characters were secretly gay. That was only marginally more entertaining, because watching

Hey Kids! It's the Omen Coloring Page! Seriously! Get your crayons and draw a pretty picture! Ser your crayons and draw a premy picture: We're not just too lazy to find filler, honest!

Similarly held up as a comedy classic, and similarly boring, was Airplane!. Hell, I couldn't even watch all of Airplane!—I had to stop when it got to the part of the mov. ie where there's a ten-minute disco scene. Set in Korea. That shit doesn't fly anymore, man. I mean, I watched the first half-hour or so of that movie, and they were barely on the goddamn plane. When I see a movie about a plane, I expert 90% of it to be set on the goddamn plane. I hold up as a contrasting example the masterwork that was Snakes on a Plane. There is a plane movie that does not distract you from the plane for more than a few minutes at a time. All the main characters are on the plane within ten minutes of the opening credits, and the action doesn't cut away from the plane for more than a few minutes at a time.

Speaking of minutes, 2001: A Space Odyssey consists of too many of them. For one of the most famous films of one of the most famous directors of all time, that's one boring fucking movie. Seriously, have you watched this thing? It's way, way too long for what it is. And if you don't like that. fuck you.

Anyway, the point is, don't get all high and mighty just because I haven't seen Blade Runner and only watched half of The Big Lebowski. I don't give a damn.

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The Pax Academia

or, Waves and Rocks and the Postmodernists by David Axel Kurtz -

It was Burke who observed that "The writers against religion, whilst they oppose every system, are wisely careful never to set up any of their own." He may as well have been writing about those modern critics who essay into the subiect of art and narrative.

When used in its original context, this argument may have been not only salient and sagacious by itself, but also effective when put directly to such people as it criticizes. When so employed, it may have brought to their attention an omission which they might not otherwise have appreciated, and challenged them then to go forth and improve upon that deficit.

Yet however applicable the challenge would be, it could not be made to the modern critic. They would not accept it. Such a gauntlet, thrown to the ground, would not be picked up; it would be looked down upon and laughed at and, perhaps derided, but most likely simply turned from

the challenge. Rather it comes from the fact that it requires a postulation, namely that such an absence is to be considered as a necessary defect. This is a supposition with which few current academics would agree.

Their philosophy of criticism would not acknowledge an absence of critical systematization, of a constant and consistent postulated aesthetic, to be a weakness. They would in fact consider it to be a great strength. The very basis of the current canon of literary criticism is the belief in the superlative nature of such a void. It is a system whose first principle is an embrace of no principles at all.

This necessary void its practitioners seek to most strictly maintain, even to the point of enforcement.

Such is the fundamental postulate of a number of identified schools or movements within criticism, both in theory, its theoretical component, and academe, its material representation. Despite their differentiations, however exhaustively described and argued these subtleties may be, they are all of them unified in their acceptance of this first principle.

These groups and movements who are defined first and foremost by their acceptance of this principle are great in number, and growing ever greater. Desperation for diversifievitable result of such esotericism as the members of these groups practice with such rigor.

These schools have a variety of names, given both by those who observe their philosophical tenants and by those who observe the observers. They include but are not limited to Post-Modernism, Post-Structuralism, Deconstructionism, existential relativism, neo-Marxism, Derridaism (&c), Frankfurt Scholasticism (&c), and most monopolistically of all, Critical Theory.

They vary from each other most frequently due to vagaries in the form or function of analysis they suggest be imposed upon a text in the absence of aesthetic evaluation. One might prefer Marxian dialectical materialism, another neofeminist criticism, another psychological deduction, another sociohistorical extraction, et cetera and ad academia. They each of them represent the position that the best way to interpret a text, specifically a narrative or work of creative This is not due to any defect in the logical perspicacity of art, is by using the tools and tenants provided by a different academic discipline.

> They seek to remove the personal aspect of literary consumption, making it not a school of thought, but a discipline for scholarship. They wish to make the reading of a text objective, and so they empanel the subjective theories of their peers as Truth for their purposes. They wish in short to keep criticism within the academic world, which is their

> For the purposes of this paper the author will use a single term to denote such groups as are so defined by their dogmatic maintenance of an absence of aesthetic principles. He proposes, for the sake of ease, "Smeagol."

> Gollum at least wanted his little ring. Better than that, one might say he needed it. Smeagol had no particular desires to speak of. Until he was transformed, and accepted his definition based upon a specific desire, he was nothing.

> It is perhaps insufficient therefore to refer to the Postmodernisms so, for they are not passive, not absent desire. It is not that there is no particular thing that they want. They want nothing; in fact they want it very badly. They are as defined by this want and their struggle to achieve it as was Gollum by his desire for his precious.

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These critics have no inherent needs, nor do they have the boldness to name for themselves a tangible, even an achievable object for their desire. They would prefer to hold nothing, lest in having a belief they might need to defend it. They would prefer, in the name of avoiding conflict, to create ultimate unity through a disavowal of the individual. The whole is not simply greater than the sum of its parts; it is hoped that it shall exist without its constituents.

Else they commit, at least in public, to a blind, universal acceptance of diversity. They would embrace everything, as Frederick the Great warned, and thus defend nothing. No change whatsoever results from such semantic acrobatics, whatever the fervor with which they are conducted.

They not only seek an absence, a desert of desire, but once they have found it they will work tirelessly to maintain it. They will tend it with constancy equal to that which the most passionate gardeners bring to their fields or flowers. This they are content to do, and require likewise of future generations, unto the end of time.

For the Smeagols believe that such a barren patch is the true end of history, within their subject if not without. They would have it be the highest possible expression of critical theory, and therefore call all which argues against it, not potentially progressive, but by definition regressive. They would make themselves the arbiters, not just of elegance, but of truth itself: they would seek to make a desert and call it peace.

To bring critical theory to this juncture was a titanic effort, a Titanomachia, and I believe that those thinkers who accomplished it deserve a certain weight of laurel to be lain upon their brows. Their error lay in their confusion of position with definition, of the relative with the absolute. They believed that, as they began their lives in opposition to the established order, and were defined by this opposition, so too they would end their lives in the same way. That even though they had won themselves the mastery of their chosen battlefield, they would still somehow remain the opposition.

That is their error, divorced from metaphor. The Smeagols believe themselves to be both the thesis and the antithesis likewise. Their worldview is still such that they compare all of their actions with a conservative order that they themselves made obsolete nearly half a century ago. Like Napoleonic France, like Bolshevik Russia, like the Behemoth of National Socialism or Milton's Parliamentary mandate, they believe that a group may be definably revolu-

tionary, though it ceases to be either new or in active opposition to anything then extant. They would seek to proclaim themselves leaders of a perpetual revolution; therefore any opposition that might be voiced would be as counterrevolution, though it occupies the same relationship to them that they did to the order which preceded them.

They are either cunning in the dishonesty they employ in order to maintain their dominion over the intellectual world ... else they are simply sad and old, and pray in every breath that no new force come up to Hegel's wheel, to try his hand at turning it upon them, crushing them beneath it, grinding them into ash and delicate dust.

The turning of Hegel's wheel might trace a sine wave across history, a constant shifting from order to chaos to new order in replacement. Postmodernism and its affiliates have brought that wave to its nadir and would work to have it continue at that position forever. They would maintain the end of history until the end of time, like a group of hierophants who tend the prescribed rituals until the coming of the prophesied final days.

In this way have the myriad philosophies of the past been worked into unity through the unanimous rejection of such dynamism, such history. The grand and many-headed hydra has now been reduced to a single serpent, its belly pressed flat to the earth. Diversity has been ground into University. It is truly the ultimate one-party system of philosophy; it is as the many voices of democracy brought into harmony through the enforcement of Communism, or whatever other flavor of Leviathan so hungry and so well-fed.

Yet there are many who would identify themselves with, or by, one or another facet of this movement. Many of these are not at all old; some of them are still at their studies, preparing to take the mantle from the proselytes of the older generation as they retire upon their textbook royalties and university pensions. There are those still who devote their lives and scholarly energies entirely to the expansion, examination and defense of their chosen flavor of Smeagol. This they do in the precise tradition of the proponents of various minutae within dogmatic theology whose successors, as academics, they remain.

In tending their garden, though tending it towards infertility, they believe that they are simply supporting natural and perhaps inevitable trends though their scholarly endeavors. They would believe that the fundamental state of nature is one, not of dynamism, but of entropic immobility. They are simply hasteners of inevitability, and therefore eas-

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ily call themselves progressive.

Yet if this is so then an intellectual system, properly razed, should forever remain so thoroughly annihilate. The garden, once sewn with salt, should never again yield its diverse, divisive, objectionable fruit. How could it then rise up to reassert its myriad aesthetic preferences and subjective philosophical designs?

Yet the Smeagols in their various forms are required to expend constant effort in order that their pacific, prosaic paradise continue unmolested for them to frolic in. This they attempt through the mobilization of the traditional scholarly arsenal, which simultaneously bombards its charges with words and publications while requiring them to memorize and accept its tenants (or feign acceptance thereof) in order to secure academic advancement.

It is an efficient system, for it requires only one generation to pass for it to be made universal. If two decades of college freshmen are forced to accept the same ideologies, the following years' tutorial-halls shall be filled with those who have been raised on just such ideologies. Conflicting theories of critical aesthetics shall fade and disappear; the rebellion will be cauterized, and shall not even be aware of it. Such treatment will keep it from reproducing, and so of course it will wither after a generation; for such treatment is nothing but intellectual sterilization.

Still new shoots continue to push upwards from time to time. Even such as are able to take root have been, during the past few decades, most effectively cut short, and long before they have a chance to fully flower.

The Smeagols not only utilize obfuscatory language in their polemics for the sake of simple occultation, but they seek to create for themselves and for the topic a dedicated esoteric vocabulary. This is done in order to require that those who would engage them in debate be already so thoroughly immersed within that which they would seek to damage or destroy as to require that, though they attack it in one facet or another, in general substance they shall defend it entire. As it is a part of them, certainly a part of their reputation and necessarily the bulk of their academic credentials, defend it they shall. Otherwise they should argue for their own abnegation, or at least the abnegation of their scholarly efforts, their qualifications, their careers.

It is the same tactic employed by a corporation, who grants stock options to its employees that they are ever more financially invested in the success of their company, and therefore are encouraged to provide the highest quality

and greatest quantity of labor in its service. It is the same tactic employed by a government, that requires a person to accept its authority, to become a citizen, before they are protected by it enough that they might argue against its policies or its right to exist. It is the same tactic employed by the Church of the Middle Ages, which required that before any person might debate theology, they must themselves become a priest.

I do not propose that the employ of this tactic came about, in this or in any of the aforementioned situations, through the guiding hand of some sort of scholarly conspiracy. It is defensive adaptation, the inevitable result of an organism attempting to persevere against natural selection. No doubt it came about organically, born out of simple necessity. Yet it remains, as does the thing which it protects, and in symbiosis they both flourish, and thus does all else wilt.

In this the Smeagols are no different from those early individuals who banded together to form a tribe or creed, so as to face the competition of opposing parties, states, or churches with equal power. It is no different a tact than must be employed by any corporation which endeavors to make its way through the fair anarchy of market capitalism. Though they may call themselves Marxists, or adherents of any other variety of social, political, or economic theory that is not commonly practiced or in vogue, these Smeagols began and have always existed in the free market of ideas.

They may most commonly detest open capitalism, as it is not only associated with the bourgeoisie above which they wish to rise, but likewise requires the constant maintenance of a specific value judgment, namely a commitment to self-interest, a declaration akin to "Greed is good." Yet as is demonstrated by the veritable monopoly upon that market that they currently enjoy, which through many years of efforts they have earned for themselves, they have proven themselves to be able capitalists indeed.

Therefore the metaphor of a tended desert is not just poor; it is wrong. But the mistake in metaphor is not ours. It is theirs.

Perhaps the implications of this falsity would be better brought to the attention of the Smeagols (for such reasonable argument, in the finest tradition of Burke as mentioned before, ought to be our first goal) through the employ of a more fitting complex of imagery.

The labor of the Smeagols is truly like that of a group of workers who build a dam for to hold back a river. To meet their standards this dam must utterly contain the flowing water behind it. Only the barest trickle might be allowed through the spillways to relieve pressure — Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, Kathy Acker, drip drip drip — but otherwise the waters, with all their swirling generative energy, must be stopped entire. Else they shall only go downstream to feed the tributaries and irrigation canals, dry these many years, and their richness shall allow for the bearing of innumerable flavors of fruits and fancy, thoroughly complicating scholarly matters to the point where literature might once again be thought unsolvable.

Yet as the waters continue to flow from upstream of this blockade, so too the collection of currents and forces behind the dam continues to build. The waters, though contained, continue to rise. As such the scurrying Smeagols must devote themselves constantly to raising the level of the dam, that it might itself rise no less quickly than the waters held behind it. Such an activity on the part of these busy builders is equivalent to the exhaustive autodidacticism practiced by those postmodern critics who require all others to observe the commandment against aesthetic postulation and systematization.

One might introduce another image which describes the tactics they follow so as to slow the gathering of the water, or at least lessen its threatening force – desalinization, or filtration, or some such alluvial illusion – that might be considered as the equivalent of the classroom tactics employed to require utter fealty from the students whose educations are placed in their care. As a product of such pedagogic methods, you might understand why I am incapable of conjuring more appropriate imagery.

For I should like to think that, fundamentally, a person's education should never require the limitation of the positions which they might adopt. In such a situation of requisite blind allegiance, that student's education is all but crippled, regardless of the 'truth' or desirability of the cult in which their belief is required. I should hope that education should always be defined by the encouragement, if not indeed the requirement, of argument and objection. The faith which praises subjectivity must itself be subjected to analysis, and not held as objective truth. Critical theory is not above itself, is not a Smeagol of another color.

Yet it is exceptionally difficult to convince a Smeagol that argument in this area is, not only acceptable, but even possible. They believe, in the grand tradition of dialectical materials.

rialism, that to argue against a position is to assert the moral superiority of the argument, the antithesis, over that of the established thesis. They believe that in their demanded lack of a thesis, their utter embracing of the void, antithesis is by definition impossible. They have reached the end of history, where Hegel's wheel has ceased to turn. They have broken the axel. They are immune.

Adorno, that early apostle of this movement, once famously stated that "Poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." This statement has been extended to its logical conclusion, what the Romans would have dubbed ad absurdum progression. This new extrapolation holds that all narrative is inherently barbaric that might, even potentially, encourage such a thing as a new Shoah.

For what is an aesthetic bus a stated preference for one thing over another? For one form of music over another? For one book, perhaps, above all? And if a person gave a preference for one sort of book, that sort of book might be produced in greater quantities than the others. People might be encouraged, not to express themselves openly, but to write for the satisfaction of a market, to survive therefore off of income rather than grants. Some would argue that even this democratic and open-market process is overly censorious, and that totalitarian constraints ought justly to be applied in order to prevent their occurrence.

In this way might lay people, readers, make it their business to encourage others to write one sort of a book more than another. They might do so strongly. They might dislike one sort of book so much that they would just as soon not see it produced at all. They might attempt to see such books removed from print. They might even burn such copies as they are able to get their hands on.

This is perhaps best understood in concord with the fact that these intellectuals were many of them German Jews who had just witnessed the Shoah, that great demonstration of Heine's maxim that "Those who start by burning books shall end in burning people." What began in Germany with a desire to define a group, that this group might work for its own advancement, became the definitive separation of Judaism, the institutionalized marginalization of Jewish culture, then Jewish worship, the working of ethnic Jews in German society, and finally, of course, the existence of Jews or Judaism upon the face of the earth.

Unfortunately, those who argue concerning theory are very rarely concerned with its interactions with fact. Theo-

retical physicists often look down upon engineers, just as it is not uncommon for literary critics to remain far removed from the creation of works which might be subjected to criticism. Therefore, rather than seek to make imperfect, pragmatic compromises to their theory, such as might allow for books to be disliked but not people to be killed, it was instead chosen that the theory would discard all such possibilities entire. It would disband all aesthetic schools of thought and declare one theory to rule them all, that being the theory of no-theory at all.

No longer would scholars or readers look on at each new movement of art and literature, each new aesthetic system proposed, and wait with trepidation to see, as Yeats had it, "What rough beast, its hour come round at last,/Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?" It could not bear the idea that the creature might be another great beast, another Holocaust. So it strives to take all such creatures, pregnant with new ideas and new principles, and abort their journey as soon as might be possible.

Thus it is now required that all new narratives conform to the morality which holds for infinite acceptance and toleration of all but disagreement, of a subordinate aesthetic. This system is never described or defended further, for those who hold with its tenants do not believe that they are capable of obeying a morality. Therefore, as it cannot be acknowledged, it cannot be critiqued.

This system of aesthetics, or rather a lack thereof, is taken even to the extreme whereby nothing new might be proposed as a superlative. This because so doing would naturally cast other things into, if not a negative light, than at least one which shines not so brightly. Such would not celebrate diversity. Such would not be tolerant, universally and indiscriminately praising. Respect for diversity seems to be something achievable only when all people are required to think the same. They mistake the destruction of the problem for the creation of the solution; they would make a desert and call it peace.

The Smeagols are not be willing to accept the potential coming of light in exchange for the potential coming of soldarkness. As such, all is twilight: grey, and mute.

It is in this position that the theory of criticism currently resides. It is here that we find ourselves, us all who wish at all to participate in academic discourse or who wish to exist in an intellectual capacity at any level, generative or analytic or consumptive for education or for pleasure. The myriad

contortions in which it puts itself to maintain that unlike by physicality, embracing the word, have been the primary products of scholarly exercise for generations. It is here that those so-known public intellectuals would tell us that things will, and even ought to, stay.

Yet it is during this period of intentional stagnation that we can see so little variety within creation. All the effort of the scholarly community is being put towards the building of the great dam in the name of the avoidance of conflict and the perfection, the solution, of theory. The rich river waters do not irrigate the farms, perhaps beautiful and perhaps terrible, that lay downstream, remnants of the earlier varieties of human philosophy and aesthetic systems, potential foundations for things to come. They do not allow, most certainly, that anything new be sown and nurtured forth.

And the busy Smeagols, brows furrowed, who could be shaping and working the fields to raise myriad fruits as varied as their possible interpretations within this horticultural metaphor, are instead laboring at haiding bricks in increasing quantity and in ever working to deepen their near-impenetable density.

Very well then, we have in front of us an end of history. Should this body at motion be not acted upon by outside forces it shall remain in motion, a corpse with lungs kept heaving by a bellows. They are good at it. They are getting better every day. Without opposition, they will continue, with no end in sight.

The question that I propose we sak is, is this the critical situation in which we wish to find ourselves as time rolls forward? Does this satisfy us? Can we call this damming progress? Do we like what it gives us? Can we call this desert peace?

I know that it is popular in these manifesti to speak with absolute force and surety, as if to convince through certitude instead of through argument and demonstration the superiority of one set of aesthetic principles. I have not the stomach for such postulate patriotism; I find it comic.

Therefore I shall speak only for myself. For me, it is not

The current critical postulates do not satisfy me. To me it is not beauty, it is banality. To me it is not peace but the absence of both war and peace and everything else in which a reader might indulge themselves. Smeagol is not my bedfellow of choice; his company does neither stimulate nor sate my aesthetic. That which he represents is not history's firm

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conclusion, it is its abnegation. It is dull, and what it produces is unsurprisingly dull therefore. It is boring.

As we are speaking of art and literature I cannot think of a more condemning verdict that might be passed. I should not mind loving a work of art; but as opposed to being bored by it, I should much prefer even to hate it. Let me raise to it an homage, an offering, a pitchfork, a torch, anything but my hand to cover my mouth as I yawn.

I am unsatisfied, and therefore seek to be satisfied. The current critical tenants do not satisfy me, and therefore I shall seek to find those that shall. This is all that I require to begin.

If you enjoy living in this paltry depression, this pax academia where the Smeagol play, go to. I myself do not. It is not enough for me to store the energy like water behind the dam. I would let it out, let it tear down in its force the entire wall which holds it behind. I would let it bring its nurturing energies to every garden and field and farm within the world of ideas, that they might bare every sort of fruit that is imaginable.

And thus be tasted, by all the people of the world, and doubly so by those whose educations and intelligences have given them palates to suit. And those who taste of genocide and not genesis, of destruction and not construction, be the target by good and decent people of their best efforts at quarantining and quelling entire. That selection shall be used to breed better, more beautiful ideas, and more beautiful works thereafter, rather than enforced extinction used to end history as artificially as a nuclear winter. That in this garden, constantly competing and seeking to improve itself, constantly trying every new thing it might and all of which it can dream, there might truly be found a garden that, though it cannot be called peace, can be called beauty.

How bored I am with the fruits of postmodernism, I may only hope that my metaphor is just, and that once the dam has broken in one place it shall break in others, until the energies it has trapped will come rushing forth. For the aesthetics that a person might postulate are myriad, and though many themselves are not to my taste, many I would call ugly, many evil, many likewise are beautiful, many good, and in their entirety they are glory itself.

Let that, then, be the basis of my proposed aesthetic system. In the great Hegelian tradition (he grudgingly admits) it is antithetical to that system which currently bestrides the arts like a tenured colossus. Both of these systems, the current Postmodernist and this new proposal, this conscious

and enlightened acceptance of the desirability of choosing aesthetic principles, this post-postmodernism, this enlightened premodernism, would be systems of extremes. Yet rather than requiring complete acceptance, as we have it now, I should like to see a situation come about which selection, not natural, but unnatural, but human, might constantly allow those things which humans might create to better serve humanity, and better please it, anon.

Let those headwaters, so long captured, be liberated, now as they never have been before. Let them, I pray, pour forth, and range as far as they may.

Hampshire Haikus by Mia Metivier

Saga has opened So much reading left to do Stomach is growling

Feel liberated Cool breeze flowing through window Fly into the blue

Disgusting coffee Bitter taste decaf won't help Bring on the Earl Grey!

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Ten Reasons to be a Vegetarian by Adam Gottlieb

1 Animals are cute.

2. Many celebrities such as Brad Pitt, Jerry Seinfeld and Mary Tyler Moore, are vegetarian.

3. In a study recently done at the University of Anchorage, Alaska, scientists discovered that certain types of animals such as rattlesnakes, man o wars, puffer fish, scorpions and poison dart frogs, are poisonous.

4. When you eat animals, there's a chance that their ghosts will come back and haunt you, or invade your dreams, or release their angry spirits on your children. By amassing such huge quantities of bad spiritual karma, you also make it more likely that you will have some doomed, miserable life as a factory-farm livestock in your next reincarnation. Plus some animals have psychic supernatural powers and can give you cancer if you eat them.

5. Soy alternatives taste better.

6. If you ever have to carry around food in your pockets, it will be easier to carry fruit, veggies, or french fries than a rare steak.

7. The average meat product contains only 10% meat, with 15% hate and 75% fear.

8. I got a job working on the campus farm. The cows were named Cookie, Sadie, Bethany, Cocoa, Sam, Socrates, Caesar, and Bacchus. Two weeks into the job, Sam was slaughtered. I don't know what that means, exactly – so I went on wikipedia and read about slaughterhouses. Some time ago a friend asked me if I was vegetarian and I told him I don't eat mammals. It's not a matter of compassion – I just find that I'm less often confused if I'm eating fewer animals. I never said "beef is murder." He might not have taken me seriously.

9. According to wikipedia, people of the Jain faith honor all life, human and nonhuman. It is the only religion that requires all of its monks and clergy from every sect and tradition to be vegetarian. Jainists refuse food obtained with unnecessary cruelty. Certain root vegetables, potatoes, garlic and onions, are usually avoided in order to preserve the lives of the plants. A lot of people would probably consider this diet overly restrictive, even obsessive. But it reminds me of a Calvin and Hobbes strip where Calvin asks his parents what would happen if we all died and it turned out God was a big chicken. Lots of us omnivores are very respectful and admiring of vegetarianism - some of us have heard that if everyone in North America reduced their animal food consumption by just 10 percent, the grain we would save from animal feed could be used to feed all of the hungry throughout the world. But when it comes to the animals themselves, how often do we roll our eyes and say "life feeds on life," and "meat just tastes so good?" How many reasons do we need?

10. The next day, when putting grain out for the cows, I accidentally put food in Sam's spot. Someone reminded me that he was gone, and I swept his food to the left for Cookie. Since then, I've been more confused than ever, even without eating mammals. The cows and pigs seem to know what's in store. How could they not – one by one their numbers falter as members of their company are loaded into the trailer. So to cheer them up I scratch the tops of their heads. I talk to them, rarely knowing what to say. Wikipedia defines murder as the unlawful killing of another human person with malice aforethought. A friend has asked me "Adam, why don't you try to make friends that aren't going to be slaughtered?" And I laugh. I can't even take myself seriously.

I'm Sorry Lynn Miller I Can't Turn In My Paper, Paul Newman Is Dead by Audrey Weber

It's a Saturday, around 2 pm, I am sitting in a very uncomfortable chair on the second floor of library trying to write a paper on how too much pig poop in lakes is bad because there's a lot of phosphorus in pig poop because they only have one stomach and therefore don't make phytase which is like natures solution to too much phosphorus. I am very confused and tired and sick of words starting in "p". I glance up at my friend, who is attempting to write a paper on The Raven. We have been there since 11, and needless to say spirits are not high.

Also, if you are interested in a clearer mental picture of the moment, it's raining.

I only really looked up from the article I was reading on how to make phytase from fungi (and by that I mean Facebook) to see if she would pass me the box of tissues we had brought with us because, not unlike every one else everywhere, we have colds. Instead she goes, "Paul Newman died."

And I go, "Shut the fuck up."

Paul Newman can't have died because he doesn't age, he is lacking in aging, he is the anti-old. If Paul Newman went to Hampshire his glass Ball jar would be forever filled with water from the fountain of youth. He is stuck in a black and tion for it is Breast of Gold. No name could fit it better white universe where time has no power, and everyone only he is a picture on a salad dressing bottle sitting between my to how our days were with the most rapt attention.

My mother told me that she is freaked out by this fact befatherly. He is included in the small list of famous men that she allows her self to, for lack of a better word eash about. They are all, as a side note, elevated to first name status in conversation and reference (Paul, Viggo, George...). 1 am grandparent of mine at an appropriate age for dying. That's just not going to cut it. I'm just going to have to demand that mine stay alive until I'm ready for them to go. Which is never.

guess whenever I miss you too much I can watch a movie or hermitage in the mad summer of 1970. eat a salad or something. Hey, maybe I can get my grandpa to take some acting classes ...



In a rush to leave Bus departs with forgotten Pencil Sharpener

On Bron-yr-Aur by David Axel Kurtz

An hour's wander north of the Welsh market town of Machynlleth sits the stone cottage of Bron-yr-Aur. The name was given to that quiet piece of land in time out of mind. Who called it this, and why, we may only wonder. Else we may simply accept its perspicacity, as a fair English transla-

A low wall of stones encircles the simple house. Its wineats raw eggs and whiskey. Paul Newman can't die because dows overlook the low valley of the River Dyfi. A small hill rises sharply behind, all wild grasses except for a poplar and sister and I on the dinner table ever night silently listening a linden here and there. It is most likely that this mound is the breast to which the name of the place refers, so nourish-Paul Newman was born the same year as my grandpa. ing and generative is its grazing and garden-soil.

Here there is no electricity, no connection to telephone cause her feelings toward Paul Newman have never been or internet, no running water and no plumbing. The driveway is nothing but a path of earth which leads to the house. It is only a driveway in truth on those few occasions when a car drives upon it. Else it is but land.

The house was used in the 1950s by the Plant family as freaked out by this fact because I am not ready to have any a place for weekend getaway. As the son Robert grew older he kept it for a hermitage and retreat. After the mad times which followed the founding of Led Zeppelin, the Welsh cottage of Robert's boyhood became a picture of rest and respite. Along with fellow musician Jimmy Page and the oc-So anyway, I'm really sorry you died Paul Newman, but I casional one or other, Bron-yr-Aur was made his home and

The hill which rises above the cottage was made bare in ancient times, stripped of its trees for wood, or to make pasture-land, or just to keep beasts from dwelling there in. Since that time nature has healed itself, not simply by returning to its earlier primeval state but by becoming whole with this new condition.

The result is a place where these two friends were able to sit and speak and find themselves and all the piece of world which was around them. They had leisure to explore the land in walking and in watching and to explore their thoughts in music and in words. They were uninterrupted by the turning of the world beyond their sight but could distract themselves with the movement of the earth just around and underfoot. They could watch the seasons change on every tree and feel the slight vicissitudes of time and place for every

made day that passed with them. They could wander, Page with his blue-eyed merle dog Strider always by his side, and mile better every day on the Professor's adage that Not all show who wander are lost.

It is no wonder then that in this place, with musical insuments and paper and pen, were some of the finest of Led Locclin's songs found and recorded. Two of these works re named for the cottage and the land around it. Others were samply inspired, or else shaped by its environment. they songs were to be recorded and released on five albums wer the following twelve years. As Jimmy Page would later on the time he spent at Bron-yr-Aur "established a standard of traveling for inspiration... which is," he added, "the best mine a musician can do."

Yet perhaps much of this picture is fancy and idle daybeam. During much of the time the musicians spent there, her were accompanied by Robert Plant's new wife Maureen. Few rock stars are known for the quietude of their relationhirs. They had with them also Robert's daughter Carmen and in a child of eighteen months serenity is usually cause for concern more than for joy. Page's girlfriend Charlotte Vartin was also most often in residence, along with at least mo Zeppelin roadies and who knows whoever else. We may only speculate how these people had their fun in this rustic struction, what exotic plants and sordid drinks they one way or another imbibed, what grand or greedy debauches they iound to pass the time.

The variety of their stays at Bron-yr-Aur, its specifics and their qualities, these are more the provenance of the mythmakers and historians and voyeurs of rock and roll. What remains essential is the potential of the place and their time there. They were unburdened, and had all their will and abilities to burden themselves with whatever they chose, be it strolling or composing or consummating what they wished. They had at their disposal all their learning and all their abilities to use as they saw fit: to entertain themselves, to produce, to learn, to grow, or else simply to tense or relax in merry lackaday. They had a life which would sustain them and a home they could change to the limits of their powers and imaginations. There were no laws but those which governed the strengths of their bodies and powers of their mink

They could have set themselves to compose more, or less, and been more or less successful by many means of measurement. It was their place to determine their own def-

initions of success and satisfaction. They were not limited either to music, but could have written poetry or prose or painted or made paints or looked at paintings. They could have sang epics to the hill or told tales to the trees. They could have planted catnip or chamomile or cannabis for their tea. They could have table-talked into the night so long as the candles held out or listened to each other's voices in the dark. This they could have done every night. Their time, and their lives, were their own.

No doubt they were sharply criticized, as were so many others of their generation, for behaving so instead of seeking honest work or respectable college degree. Yet I believe that it is the place of college to provide just such a situation and just such opportunities to those within its walls. A place of higher learning should give them unburdened time to explore themselves and others, to walk in solitude or be in company and do both in full measure. It should provide a quiet living-space that they can make their own, and move about and live within as they choose.

Anything thereabove ought only to enhance and ease the experience, not to mold it or force it to something elsewhere determined. A college would do well to offer a library, that a student might count as their peers not only their fellow friends, but also all those who have come before and written or been written of and all the knowledge of the world and those things that cannot speak of themselves. A college would do well to bring together students of as near infinite variety as the Bard could have hoped for, so as many new and exertic ways and wanderings might be seen and told of and experienced and built upon by them all. A college would do well to provide good people, wiser and more traveled in the world, to guide and help the students as they need. These things, at least, I should like from any college of mine.

It would be beneficial as well for a college to see that encouragement might always be offered its students, that they be incited to use their time and energies as wisely as they may. These student activities should always be encouraged to reflect upon their desirgs and to be asserted abuses in these reflections by all their peers, of which professors me port re one rimonk mouse

It is necessary likewise that a college secure for all its students a space where their physical safety is granded in full measure. A student who is torced to detend their body will hardly have the years to develop their much bet this security of the corporeal ought to exist specifically so that there might be allowed, even encouraged, an intellectual space which is as unsafe as it is possible to create. The college community must provide the students who compose it the freedom to challenge both themselves and their fellows. This freedom cannot exist if the shining hill upon which it sits is anything but a new Areopagus.

It is imperative that these resources ought to exist first and last as enhancements to the collegiate experience. They must only be as tools which the students might use to rove farther and delve deeper both without and within. They cannot be as chains which bind or weights that slow or labyrinths whose requisite navigation brings but waste and a drive to dull despair. College should be only more than that which was found at Bron-yr-Aur. No institution, whatever the volume and quality of its resources, can ever hope to equal even that simple stone cottage, unless its students are still allowed the liberty to direct themselves, both to error and to triumph.

We can only imagine what might have been accomplished by Plant and Page had they such resources in addition to such freedom and such peace. We cannot imagine what things might be accomplished by each and every student, should they be given such a magnificent opportunity to wander and yet be not lost.

Should ponder homework Creating haikus instead This is addicting

I henceforth swear to Give up procrastinating Starting tomorrow

OMEN NOTICE BOARD

9

EXCALIBUR is pleased to announce the latest iteration of DEATHPEST, a semesterly role-playing tournament, to take place on SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18TH in Franklin Patterson Hall, beginning at 6pm. Be a lover and a fighter,

If you would like to run an EPEC ACTIVITY during Jan Term, such as a course, workshop, group independent study, or other type of learning activity, obtain an application from the EPEC board across from the post office, or online at epec.hampshire.edu and hampedia. org/wiki/EPEC. Completed applications can be placed in the EPEC mailbox in the Community Leadership and Activities Office or emailed to epec@hampshire.edu, Suggested deadline is November 1st.

Speaking of EPEC, there will be an INFORMATION SESSION on EPEC in the FPH Faculty Lounge on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21ST at 3:30pm. Learn how to participate in and run EPEC activities and make them work for you.

CARDBOARD BOAT BUILDING AND RACING will take place in the RCC Pool on November 8th. To reserve a spot, email epec@hampshire.edu before October 26th.

Submit to THE OMEN. Send your submissons to ejs07@ hampshire.edu. We Print Everything."

Seriously, I'm just trying to fill up this column. I could scan in the article goblins that Audrey drew for me after I asked her to, but the only scanner I can think of is all the way in ASH and I'm really not eager to muck about with any of that right now. So I'm stuck filling the space with this nonsense. Seriously, though, you should come to Deathfest. I'm going to be DMing, and I can tell you that it will be awesome. Even if you have never roleplayed before, you should come. We are going to do our best to make sure you have fun. At least , before you die.

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I Could Never Get the Hang of Thursdays Life After Hampshire

by Rachel Rakov

Hello, Hampshire! I'M BACK!

I'm sure the above sentence has confused many of you, so allow me to clarify. For the past two or three years, I've been writing a little column for the Omen called "I Could Never Get The Hang of Thursdays", which covered topics such as brushing one's teeth in public parks, why I have no respect for the BLT as a sandwich, blatant lies about Idaho, and lists of things to avoid while attempting to write erotic literature. (For those of you who've missed out on these tidbits of literary genius, feel free to look them up in old issues of the Omen and, upon reading them, remark "... www, these are really not that funny".)

For those 5 people in my fanbase (I figure 3 of them must have graduated with me) who wondered why my columns suddenly disappeared around April of last semester... the III. (Beware; it lurks in the shadows and then attacks and devours you ... no matter how caught up you are, how on top of things you are ... it will get you in the end.) All that being said, I am now a gainfully unemployed member of real society! I've got nothing but time now, and I look forward to using this plethora of free time to write my little column that you'll ignore as you flip through the pages of your Omen looking for the newest issue of ... well, whatever comics they're running right now. (I guess "The Peeps" and "Black Sheep & Frog" are both over now, huh? But wait, didn't Black Sheep not graduate?) I'll be writing with a new angle, though ... it turns out that there are, in fact, harder things to get a hang of than Thursdays. (Physics, for one. Also, crocheting.) And, as it turns out...life after Hamp-

So, what have I been doing since I graduated?

The short answer is, not much. Mostly I've been avoiding answering people when they ask me what the "next step" in my life is going to be. ("Plastics!"...Oh, wait, we're going green, now... "Sustainable alternatives to plastics!") I've also been missing some things about college that I took for granted – living either with or within a five minute walking distance from all of my friends, eating pancakes at midnight on fridays, never necessarily having to get up before 11am. Mostly, though, I've been working on a new important list. I think it's even more interesting, than the list of names of people I'm acquainted with (yes, I actually have a list of

those names, mostly because I'm convinced I know more people whose names start with A than any other letter of the alphabet). This new list has officially been named the List Of Things I Learned In College. This lists includes, but is not limited to, some of the following things:

- -- How to count backwards from 8 super quickly
- How to take care of a recently pieced navel
- The difference between the words "archaic" and "ar cane"
- About the existence of vegetable extract
- -- How to fold two hand towels into an elephant
- -- Why one should not attempt a polyphasic sleep cy-
- -- The International Phonetic Alphabet
- -- How to talk your way through college benacracy
- -- Why pandas are inefficient animals
- -- How to role play
- -- How to make a fishman (sort of)

I feel like there's got to be a way for me to get some of this excellent knowledge of mine onto a resume. Maybe I can put some of these Learned Abilities of under the "miscellaneous skills" part of a job application. I'd certainly call somebody back for an interview if they'd written on the application that they could fold two hand towels into an elephant, just to see them do it. But perhaps this is why I am not an employer.

Anyway. I suppose that's all for now. But never fear, for I shall return in a fortnight, with even more useless information and a probably less-entertaining column! Who knows, though. Maybe writing this column for the Omen will bring me good fortune! (It could be a ... good Omen... hehe ... I feel like this is a pun, but it's probably stretching it to the point of just making readers feel like poking out their eyeballs. But then again, if I've made a reader feel like poking out his or her eyeball, I have probably done my job for the day.)

*Rachel Rakov is a recently graduated F '04, and is still inspired by Douglas Adams. She is on the Facebook. Feel free to contact her with column suggestions, questions, comments, and job offers.

Fiction! In the Omen! You Can, Too!

by Zachary Clemente -

it seems to feel like, I can't be too sure. I looked it up in a big dictionary, and from what I think I know, explosive was what it felt like to wake up each day, wake up each hour, wake up about every 10 minutes. It's only a little after noon, and I've already woken up dozens of times today. A shattering of focus that shades my eyes, covers my ears, stills my mouth, and dulls my mind, for a brief instant, then I'm back, then I'm awake. I keep three sizes of notepads with me, the smallest for the memories of now, it says "NOW" on it in big glossy red letters and

"Daron."

I have a larger one for memories of later, reminders and appointments and

"Daron, what are you thinking now?"

the biggest notebook, actually a large sketch book with penciled lines that resemble an obtuse piece of loose-leaf, that one's for

"Daron!"

I was going somewhere with this.

His eyes flicker and his shoulders slump back into the worn leather chair. As a habit, his fingers come up to grip the bridge of his nose.

out and a notepad lay anxious and waiting.

"Was what something?"

"Do you always grab your nose when this happens?" rises to his nose. The pen leaks ink on the first line, black members breaching sturdy preset blue outlines.

"When what happens?"

The pen clicked in annoyance. "When you wake up."

"I don't know, I can't remember."

"I think you do, maybe is has a connection." The pen strikes the paper, enthusiastically jotting a near-incompre-sion, that'll be..." hensible note.

"If you say so."

Rigid fingers steeple in disapproval. "Tell me what you remember today."

I remember the first umbrella I bought. It was a long, black umbrella, basic, simple, and beautiful. I never owned one until I lived in London, but it rained more than I thought,

Explosive. That's what it feels like. Well, that's what so I bought it. It was the price you expect, and did what you expected, and for that, I loved it. It had a metal clasp inside that snagged your fingers if you weren't careful and

"I don't remember much, just a few vague images, like movie stills, each telling me something different"

that umbrella is what got me to Allie.

"What do the frames show you?" The pen was back in a passive position, prepped to strike.

"A woman."

"Who was she?" The pen edges toward the notepad, hoping to make another strike.

"She was my wife years ago. She died in a car crash."

"Do you think about her often?" The ink wound made a soft scratching sound.

"As much as I can."

"But why do you see different things?"

"Let me check my notebook." He opened to a page that was dog-eared, and began to read from a jumble of tightly packed scribble. "There was a scientist who said that we. uhm, re-create our memories each time we remember them. and that, we have the natural ability to change those memories, as we re-create them. And what he said was that in theory, the safest memories are those with amnesiacs, who "Was that something you always do?" A pen snapped can't remember them, so ... so they can't change them."

"Do you believe that Daron?"

"I..." His shoulders slump and he wakes up. His hand

"Good morning."

"Yeah."

"Alright Daron, I have my next appointment here, would you like to pay now, or settle the bill later?"

"Now will be fine."

The watch face shined as it was raised. "A three hour ses-

"You mean two."

"What do you mean Daron?"

"I've woken up about twelve times now. I've only been here since one."

The watch face slowly fell. "How do you figure that?"

"I have a watch on my wrist under my sleeve; I marked the time I came in." He set a check on the desk. "Don't wor-

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He opened the door. "Your secret is safer with me than ry. with anyone else." He closed the door.

th anyone It wasn't in this car, it was a pickup truck. Musty smelling It was small in the mirror Ripped and more faded to white hanging inside, a dusty mirror. Ripped and worn seat cushions with from the sticking out of the sides. Half-empty carton of cigapens lying on the passenger side of the dashboard. Lucky rettes lymb

Strikes. She didn't smoke them much so her deep brown hair never smelled, but

His hand slapped the ringing alarm clock duct taped to his dashboard and pulled into an abandoned gas station. He raised his hand up to the bridge of his nose.

He circled around the abandoned gas station and turned back onto the main road.

She wasn't killed in this car, it was a pickup truck. We had bought it off cheap, with the new car smell still seeping from the untouched interior and smooth leather seats. Her pack of gum sat in the cup holder. Big Red.

As he pulled up to the parking lot, he saw a woman with along coat set a long package down at his doorstep and walk hriskly away. Her auburn hair fanned out across her back as he watched her go. When she turned the corner, he got out of his car, heading towards to the door. As he approached the door, he picked up the package and idly examined it with his hands as he stared at his door. He tucked the package under his arm and placed his free hand on the door, tracing his fingers along the slight cracks in the peeling paint, retracing the smooth contours of the bronze numbers. He pushed his weight against it and placed his head to the numbers, now warm from his hands.

We bought this house together. Somehow her dad found the perfect advert in the paper for us. This was seven years ago. We painted the door this color, because of her hair. It's faded though, used to be browner; but that's the way things go. We had never planned for

He fumbled in his pocket for his keys and dropped them in the process. He snagged his house key, lifting the rest up like some metallic drapery and opened the door.

When we first walked into the house, it was a piece of art in its own right. Gorgeous clouds were affixed to the walls, hung like mobiles spinning in individual universes, pirouetting in one full chorus; walls of continuous motion. I ended up selling them away, not sure why though.

He set his keys and package down on the kitchen table and slowly tore at the plain cardboard. He finally tore past

the encapsulating packing tape and tore off a side of the box. He thrust his hand inside and pulled.

There was a crack of thunder. With his hand still in the box, he jerked his head to look out his kitchen window, watching raindrops plummet down from the graying clouds. He dragged his hand out of the box and slowly extracted an umbrella. It was a long, slender, wooden umbrella that had a white and blue pattern scattered in its soft folds. It looked worn and well loved. He then remembered that he had left his car windows partially open.

As he cleared the threshold, he opened the umbrella to shield himself from the rain. As he looked up to inspect what pattern the umbrella held, his shoulders slumped and his hand rose to his face.

His shoe slipped on the smooth and wet stone of the stair to his door and he watched the umbrella, a picture of soft, white clouds in a chalice of blue, waver and glide through a field of raining grey billows as his head slammed to the step and his body crumpled down the remaining stairs.

He felt warmth oozing from his ears and mouth as he lay in the rain. The umbrella had collapsed in his hand and was pinching him.

I never could close the damn thing right.

As he watched his own panting chest in a ever-fluctuating puddle, he noticed a pair of legs running towards him, with a black coat tail swishing behind them. A swath of red clouded his vision as a woman carefully set his head up on her crumpled coat. He looked at her face.

We had so much together, but she's dead now.

"Who are you?"

"You don't know?"

"Are you René Magritte?"



If Hampshire Were Hogwarts

by Adam Gottlieb

After extensive research, 1 have determined that if Hampshire were Hogwarts – which it isn't – then Greenwich would be Gryffyndor, Enfield would be Ravenclaw, the dorms would be Hufllepuff and Prescott would be Slytherin.

I began thinking about Hampshire in magical terms on my first day here, talking to my friend Pesha who, after asking me how my orientation was going, reminisced on her first memorable moments as a Hampshire student. She said that the people who ended up being her best friends were some of those who she met in her very first few days. "Oh!" I exclaimed. "Like Harry Potter!"

Since then, every time I tell someone that I am a firstyear, I pretend that I am not really going to "college" at all, but rather training for a career in wizardry at Hogwarts. The way I see it, Hampshire is wacky enough to be teaching magic spells and magical abilities anyway. How many of us would actually be surprised to see a class called Ancient Runes, Beginning Divination or Advanced Potions in a Hampshire Course Catalog? Or a flyer raising awareness about the rights of House Elves? At what other muggle school would you find such a weird grading system, or such a prevalence of lifestyles devoid of any logic or order than Hampshire?

When I found out that there were four basic living spaces at Hampshire, it only took a few meaningful conversations with students and a few strolls around the campus to determine which areas corresponded to which house:

Greenwich, with its mold-ridden carpets and subsequent history of disease – by far demands the most courage of its residents. Perhaps because of their fate, it seems to me that students living in Greenwich have the support of more or less the entire student body – they seem to be the ones we all root for, the heroes of Hampshire. With the alliteration offering an almost too-obvious hint, Greenwich is clearly the Gryffyndor of this institution.

Enfield, for its part, is refined and beautiful – its pristine white walls and distinguished motifs exude an air of intellectualism and pride. I have already met many wise and witty Hampshire students within its borders. With the closest alliance to Greenwich, Enfield does much to honor the legacy of Rowena Ravenclaw.

The dorms, with which I am most intimately acquainted, are filled with loyal, if somewhat worthless, first-years like myself who are not well known and are not exceedingly talented in any area. We are, in our defense, working hard in our classes, and generally feeling a warm togetherness centering around our new lives here at Hampshire. Clearly, we are Hufflepuff. Badgers forever.

But of all of my discoveries so far, none have received as enthusiastic and unanimous agreement from my peers as this: Prescott is Slytherin. It is universally understood that this section of mods at the foot of the west hill, with its industrial and metallic architecture, far away and isolated from the rest of the student housing, hosts the most dangerous and foul-minded students in Pioneer Valley. I get chills every time I ride my bike through there.

If Hampshire were Hogwarts, our parents would probably be no more or less shocked at the structure of our school, no more or less inclined to brag about our achievements over the dinner table – proud in the face of wizard peers and secretive around muggles. Furthermore, if Hampshire were Hogwarts then the Hampshire tree would be the Whomping Willow, North Hampton would be Hogsmeade, the PVTA system would be the Knight Bus, Smith would be Beauxbatons, U Mass would be Durmstrang, the interns would be prefects, Sophie (that jack russel terrier at the farm) would be Fang, Roberta would have a sneakoscope and Sean Conlon would be Draco Malfoy.

In fact, it occurs to me now that Hampshire, like Hogwarts, seeks merely to disguise its magical properties from intruding eyes. Only now, in my second week of classes, am I realizing the complexity of this terrifying and exciting conspiracy: Hampshire is Hogwarts, the very same school we have all read about for so long. We are wizards and witches, all of us, and this school is our only chance to hone in on our magical powers. So raise the quidditch flags! Get out the Marauder's Map! Who's up for a game of Wizard Chess – I've been waiting to come here for eight years, which means I have a whole lot of muggledom to make up for. And to those who say I can't major in magic at any institution of higher learning in the world, I say "Riddikulus!"

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David's Widsom Nook An advice column by David Mansfield

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DEAR DAVID: I recently started work at a small coffee shop where each employee gets one free drink per day. This limit is just fine with me, but my friends come in all the time and expect me to give them free drinks. I'm glad to help friends out, fall giving free drinks to friends is definitely not part of my job description and I don't know what the ethics of the situation are. Am I stealing? Or just partaking in an unwritten perk?

Am I stealing? Green But Afraid of Real Punishment

DEAR BIGBARP: The most important thing here is to figure out what your moral stance on the situation is. Some would argue that you aren't doing any harm by giving out free drinks, and others would say that you're stealing from your boss. I don't have an answer here, but if you think about it, I bet you do. Whether you're the great friend who greets everyone with a free smoothie and a big smile, or my uptight brother Craig who refuses to let me into the Adventure City plastic Tunnel Extravaganza he manages just because I got lost in the tunnels and "made a scene" on one rare occasion last month, the important thing is that you make the choice and stick to it.

On one hand, it's great to be relaxed about what you do. and be a helping hand to those in need. I certainly could have used such a friend when I was lost in those plastic tunnels. After nearly thirty minutes of joyful tube blazing, I found myself on a slanted net in the middle of a giant, foam cube with at least five tunnel openings leading in different directions. In place of a floor gaped an indeterminately deep pit containing thousands of colored balls. There were children everywhere. Oh, the children! Every time I took one of the tunnels, it would lead me through a veritable labyrinth of tubes and slides, leading me right back to where I had started and disorienting me so badly that I couldn't remember which exits I had already tried. Yes, it was harrowing, but I eventually broke out and saw the light of day once more. Since then I have felt like a stronger person, and have decided for myself that I'm ready to go back. Just like you must make this decision about coffee and stuff for yourself. Despite my tremendous personal growth in the past month, Craig has since refused to allow me entry, even when I offer to pay the full admission price. I have tried to explain to him

that after all the kids ran off and the security guards came in to show me the way out, I wasn't scared anymore, and felt much more comfortable. "One of the guards even let me hold his walkie-talkie," I tell him, but he tells me that he has his job to consider. Whatever, Craig. I'm glad you broke your arm at the 1992 family reunion. Be grateful, BIGBARP, that you don't have someone like Craig standing in the way of your decision, like I do.

On the other hand, if you don't want to be the cool "free drink" dude, that's your right, too. If that's your decision, put your foot down and simply tell your friends that if they want free drinks, they'll have to pay for them like everyone else.

Also, if you get stuck in the net chamber at Adventure City, the tunnel that leads to the exit is the highest one on the wall facing the arcade, which you should be able to locate by sound once you stop yelling.

Hurricane Epsilon by Alex Wenchel

Bill's inovative plan to save beached whales encounters a hitch.



